

cases have been significant and in some cases the mortgage terms may have been fraudulent or just basically unfair. But when it comes to reducing the principal, then I think we go too far.

Many of the consumer groups would prefer to see the bankruptcy judge have the latitude to reduce the principal, and that might help those who are in default now, but that will make it more difficult for those who borrow in the future. That is because—to repeat—lenders will have to charge more interest to take into account this additional risk.

I have discussed the differences in our bills with Senator DURBIN. We tried to come to terms and find an accommodation so that we could support the same legislation. However, it appears we do support legislation directed at the same problem. The legislation I introduced is aimed at helping those caught up in the current crisis without making it harder on those Americans to own a home in the future.

The Judiciary Committee has jurisdiction on bankruptcy. The Committee has jurisdiction on the Durbin bill and on my bill, S. 2133. My position is not set in concrete. However, I am opposed to what Senator DURBIN seeks to accomplish and I am disinclined at this state based on the investigation which my staff and I have made to support his bill.

It is my hope that the Judiciary Committee will have hearings on this important issue and bring in mortgage bankers, consumer groups and investors to give us a better idea as to the intensity of the problem and what really ought to be done. Perhaps at that point we can meld our ideas into a common solution to the problem.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, NDEAM. Designated by Congress, this month is observed every October to increase the public's understanding of issues involving individuals with disabilities and their role in America's workforce. It is a time for us to reflect on past gains and goals for the future as well.

Seventeen years ago, I commended the passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, to help ensure the rights of people with disabilities throughout various sectors of society. Together with other Federal laws like the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the ADA has been key to the progress made toward the full inclusion of people with disabilities in daily life. We see reasons to cheer today, as more people with disabilities succeed in school, enter the workforce, and participate in their communities.

More remains to be done, however. When Nevadans with disabilities share

their experiences with me, I hear many of the same struggles and challenges in their stories. Employment is an issue especially foremost on their minds, as it is for any person who wants to pursue the American dream. And like all Americans, individuals with disabilities deserve a fair shot to achieve as much success as their abilities and determination will allow.

I am heartened that this sense is spreading throughout the general public, beyond those of us who see the positive contributions that Americans with disabilities make as employees and coworkers every day. Much of the increase in awareness is due to local organizations, such as Nevada JobConnect, Opportunity Village, the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living, SNCIL, and the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living. This year for example, SNCIL is partnering with the City of Las Vegas to sponsor the 16th Annual Disability Awareness Day on October 20. Similar events are expected to be held across the country in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

While improving awareness is critical, especially for dispelling false stereotypes about people with disabilities, it isn't enough. Disparities on a wide range of economic and social dimensions point to significant barriers that remain for people with disabilities who want a good job to give them not just an income, but also dignity and independence. From listening to my constituents in Nevada, I also know that the incentives between employment, health care benefits, and eligibility for government-sponsored programs can interact in very problematic ways.

I supported the passage of new laws to address these issues, such as the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act to give people with disabilities greater access to Medicaid or Medicare coverage when they go to work. I was also pleased when Congress passed the Family Opportunity Act to allow more children with disabilities to enroll in Medicaid, thereby alleviating an unfair pressure on their parents to forgo better jobs just to keep their family health coverage. Looking ahead to the future, I will continue working to make sure that people with disabilities can access the health care they need, especially as they seek to move to economic self-sufficiency. We should not lose sight of other key priorities as well, including opening more doors to education and expanding employment opportunities for those able to work.

As we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month this year, let us reaffirm the importance of its ideals and goals. From employers to policymakers, family members to people with disabilities themselves, all Americans can join in the effort to ensure that individuals with disabilities make the most of their potential—in the workplace and in all areas of society.

DARFUR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, since returning to session, much of our discussion has once again been dominated by Iraq. Given the tragedy of the administration's Iraq policy and the need to change course, this is understandable. Yet Iraq's dominance has meant that many other critical foreign policy issues have been ignored or marginalized. From Latin America to Russia, this administration has failed to develop or implement any kind of coherent strategy.

Similarly, the crisis in Darfur demands more attention. For 4 years, the world has watched this tragedy. That is right—for 4 long years. Sadly, during this time the world has mostly stood by while yet another genocide unfolded before its eyes. Many of us on both sides of the aisle and in the international community have repeatedly called for greater U.S. and global action.

President Bush has rightly called the situation in Darfur genocide. New British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has also said that, "Darfur is the greatest humanitarian crisis the world faces today." Yet, despite these statements, ultimately we have not done enough.

Today, we are at a critical juncture in Sudan. The genocide in Darfur has increasingly become a complex conflict between many factions. Refugees have spilled into neighboring countries and humanitarian workers are increasingly at risk. And just the other day, a rebel group brutally killed 10 African Union peacekeepers in a surprise raid. Sadly, the cost in lives, destruction, and human misery has been immeasurable.

In late July the U.N. Security Council voted to implement a significantly increased United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force. This peacekeeping force is desperately needed, and the United States should work with the U.N. and the global community to make sure it is implemented as soon as possible. We in the Senate should also ensure that adequate funds are available to help pay for this critical mission. But the peacekeepers are only one important step. Sudan also needs a long-term political agreement among its many factions.

Upon taking office in January of this year, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said that ending the violence in Darfur was going to be one of his top priorities. I spoke to him in July about our shared concern and commend him for advancing the peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts. I believe his tireless work has made an important difference. In early September, his efforts resulted in the announcement of formal peace talks to begin later this month between the various factions and the Sudanese Government.

These negotiations will be a critical step and deserve our strongest support. As Secretary Ban said during his recent trip, "there must be a peace to keep."

Finally, we must hold Sudanese President Bashir to his commitment to

allow peacekeepers and participate in the peace talks.

Early statements by the Government of Sudan said that it would “contribute positively to secure the environment for the negotiations” and “facilitate the timely deployment” of the 26,000 member peacekeeping force. But we have heard these commitments before and then watched as President Bashir has continued fostering violence.

I, therefore, think it is critical that we maintain pressure on the Sudanese Government to honor its commitments. The administration should continue its diplomatic efforts, and at the same time the Congress should advance bipartisan legislation that I and others have introduced to increase economic pressure on the regime.

I commend Chairman DODD and the Banking Committee for holding a hearing yesterday that focused on how best to apply such pressure, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to prepare legislation that would impose sanctions on, bar Federal contracting with, and authorize divestment from organizations that support the regime.

It is critical that the Sudanese Government understand that a lack of cooperation with the peacekeepers or the upcoming peace negotiations will increase the possibility of such legislation being enacted.

Sadly, we have every reason to be skeptical of the regime's intentions.

For example, after agreeing to the peace talks, the Government of Sudan brazenly appointed former Interior Minister Ahmad Harun one of two Sudanese officials wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes—to lead a committee to investigate human rights abuses. As Interior Minister, Mr. Harun helped fund, recruit, and arm the jingawit militia which was directly involved in perpetuating the genocide in Darfur. Mr. Harun's place is on trial in The Hague, not investigating violence he helped perpetuate.

Equally troubling are continued attacks on international aid workers as well as recent indications that Sudan

has started placing restrictions on early efforts to deploy U.N. forces.

Mr. President, the stakes are too high and the humanitarian crisis has dragged on too long to allow any further backsliding by the Sudanese Government. We must see the immediate deployment of the peacekeeping force and a concerted global effort at supporting a long-term political settlement.

BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report for fiscal year 2007 prepared by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended. This is my final report for fiscal year 2007.

This report shows the effects of Congressional action through October 1, 2007. Since my last report, dated July 26, 2007, the Congress has cleared and the President has signed Public Law 110-84, the Higher Education Access Act of 2007. The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues used in this report are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of S. Con. Res. 21, the 2008 budget resolution.

The estimates show that current level spending equals the budget resolution for both budget authority and outlays while current level revenues exceed the budget resolution by \$4.2 billion. I want to commend the Congress for not exceeding the limits set in the 2008 budget resolution for fiscal year 2007.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter and accompanying tables from CBO be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, October 3, 2007.

Hon. KENT CONRAD,
Chairman Committee on the Budget,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed report shows the effects of Congressional action on

the fiscal year 2007 budget and is current through October 1, 2007. This report is submitted under section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, as approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Pursuant to section 204(a) of S. Con. Res. 21, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. As a result, the enclosed current level report excludes these amounts (see footnote 1 of Table 2 of the report).

Since my last letter, dated July 26, 2007, the Congress has cleared and the President has signed the Higher Education Access Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-84), which affects budget authority and outlays.

The effects of that action are detailed on Table 2.

Sincerely,

PETER R. ORSZAG,
Director.

TABLE 1.—SENATE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007, AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2007

[In billions of dollars]

| | Budget Resolution ¹ | Current Level ² | Current level over/under (—) resolution |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| ON-BUDGET | | | |
| Budget Authority | 2,250.7 | 2,250.7 | 0.0 |
| Outlays | 2,263.7 | 2,263.7 | 0.0 |
| Revenues | 1,900.3 | 1,904.5 | 4.2 |
| OFF-BUDGET | | | |
| Social Security Outlays ³ | 441.7 | 441.7 | 0.0 |
| Social Security Revenues | 637.6 | 637.6 | 0.0 |

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

¹ S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, as adjusted pursuant to section 207(f), assumed approximately \$120.8 billion in budget authority and \$31.1 billion in outlays from emergency supplemental appropriations. Such emergency amounts are exempt from the enforcement of the budget resolution. Since current level totals exclude the emergency requirements enacted in P.L. 110-28 (see footnote 1 of table 2), budget authority and outlay totals specified in the budget resolution have also been reduced (by the amounts assumed for emergency supplemental appropriations) for purposes of comparison.

² Current level is the estimated effect on revenue and spending of all legislation that the Congress has enacted or sent to the President for his approval. In addition, full-year funding estimates under current law are included for entitlement and mandatory programs requiring annual appropriations, even if the appropriations have not been made.

³ Excludes administrative expenses of the Social Security Administration, which are off-budget, but are appropriated annually.

TABLE 2.—SUPPORTING DETAIL FOR THE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007, AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2007

[In millions of dollars]

| | Budget Authority | Outlays | Revenues |
|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Enacted in previous session: | | | |
| Revenues | n.a. | n.a. | 1,904,706 |
| Permanents and other spending legislation | 1,347,423 | 1,297,059 | n.a. |
| Appropriation legislation | 1,480,453 | 1,343,072 | n.a. |
| Offsetting receipts | -571,507 | -571,507 | n.a. |
| Total, enacted in previous session | 2,256,369 | 2,268,624 | 1,904,706 |
| Enacted this session: | | | |
| Appropriation Acts: | | | |
| U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-28) ¹ | -794 | 9 | -166 |
| An act to extend the authorities of the Andean Trade Preference Act until February 29, 2008 (P.L. 110-42) | 0 | 0 | -24 |
| A bill to provide for the extension of Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) and the Abstinence Education Program through the end of fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes (P.L. 110-48) | 12 | 3 | 0 |
| Higher Education Access Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-84) | -4,890 | -4,890 | 0 |
| Total, enacted this session | -5,672 | -4,878 | -190 |
| Entitlements and mandates: | | | |
| Budget resolution estimates of appropriated entitlements and other mandatory programs | -30 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Current Level 1,2 | 2,250,667 | 2,263,746 | 1,904,516 |
| Total Budget Resolution ³ | 2,371,470 | 2,294,862 | 1,900,340 |
| Adjustment to the budget resolution for emergency requirements ⁴ | -120,803 | -31,116 | 0 |
| Adjusted Budget Resolution | 2,250,667 | 2,263,746 | 1,900,340 |
| Current Level Over Adjusted Budget Resolution | 0 | 0 | 4,176 |
| Current Level Under Adjusted Budget Resolution | 0 | 0 | n.a. |

¹ Pursuant to section 204(a) of S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. The amounts so designated for fiscal year 2007, which are not included in the current level total, are as follows: